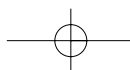
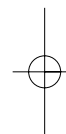
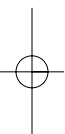




Part I

Introduction





1

The Raison d'être of Doing Development Research

The aim of *Doing Development Research* is to provide a comprehensive introduction to the process of undertaking research in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of development studies. This volume seeks, therefore, to provide the bases for a thorough initial training for anyone aiming to carry out research in, or on, developing countries. In this context, the geographical category 'developing countries' is to be interpreted in the broadest of fashions. This geographical signpost might more properly be referred to as 'overseas', referring to cases where somebody is researching in an area, region or culture other than the one in which they grew up, or with which they are now familiar. But we do not preclude doing development work in, or on, one's own country, following the premise that development is change in either positive or negative terms, and thereby occurs in all localities and regions to a greater or lesser extent (see Brookfield, 1975; Potter and Unwin, 1992; Potter et al., 2004).

Having said this, although it is hoped that the volume will address the concerns of practitioners and consultants working on 'hands-on' or applied development issues, the book is primarily designed with the needs of undergraduate and postgraduate students to the fore. For generations of students, the requirement that they should prepare a dissertation or thesis has represented their first professional-academic contact with doing development research at first hand, and this represents the starting point

for *Doing Development Research*. We assume, therefore, that the person aiming to undertake development research has attended introductory courses and read the background literature (see Chapters 22 and 28) on development theory and practice. We also hope that as part of their general undergraduate or postgraduate training they will have read a little about different research methods and the ways in which data can be collected and analysed.

The volume brings together a range of experts who have extensive first-hand experience of undertaking overseas research. It starts from the premise that overseas development is a more complex, personal, professionally demanding and nuanced experience than most manuals on research methodology acknowledge. It follows that at the outset of their work, starting students need all the help and assistance they can get. *Doing Development Research* aims to bring a much-needed cross-cultural perspective to the issues surrounding working overseas.

Doing Development Research enters a field where there are already some very good books and our intention has been to complement these, both in terms of the level of treatment and the subject areas covered. For example, a very helpful volume is provided by Scheyvens and Storey (2003). Their practical guide to doing development fieldwork considers the nature of quantitative and qualitative research at the outset, before the major parts of the book deal with preparing to go into the field, the

eventualities of actually working in the field and, subsequently, the issues involved in leaving the field. Overall, there is a strong and much needed emphasis on the researchers' positionality while preparing for, completing and acting on fieldwork, which will directly influence the research process and outcomes. We envisage that our readers who are strongly fieldwork-based may well progress to use Scheyvens and Storey (2003), having first consulted *Doing Development Research*. The same is true of several other books that deal primarily with the issues surrounding the completion of fieldwork in developing countries, like Robson and Willis (1997) and Devereux and Hoddinott (1992).

Several other very good books, while covering more than fieldwork logistics and methods, are distinguished by the fact that they are primarily aimed at the development practitioner – that is those professionals who are involved in implementation projects and consultancy research, etc. Laws, Harper and Marcus (2003) concentrate on topics such as quality issues in research, organizing a brief, approaches to evaluation, re-evaluating research for development work, as well as managing impacts. Mikkelson (2005) takes a very strongly participatory view of research and her book is aimed primarily at practitioners. Other books are avowedly aimed at postgraduates, as for example is the case with those by Robson and Willis (1997) and Scheyvens and Storey (2003).

In contrast, *Doing Development Research* endeavours to provide a clear overview for the beginning student – whether undergraduate or postgraduate. How can they set about their work – what published secondary data are already available? How can they make use of archives? (see Chapter 25) How can the literature on the chosen topic be reviewed? (see Chapter 22) How can they use the internet and other innovate sources such as images, films and photography to aid their research endeavours? If they are going into the field, what practical and logistical issues do they face? (see Chapter 2) What ethical factors are

to be borne in mind (see Chapter 3), and what are the special concerns of working across lines of race, ethnicity and identity? What about gender issues and the special requirements of working with children – what special considerations do these entail?

As we detail more fully in the next section, *Doing Development Research* covers more than fieldwork (logistical issues, working in different cultures, gender issues in fieldwork, using interpreters, field surveys, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, etc.). The volume considers doing development research not only overseas in the field, but also doing development 'at home'. This is specifically covered in Chapter 12. But *Doing Development Research* also covers this important topic in respect of using data from international agencies, using the World Wide Web for development research and other secondary sources, such as remote sensing, GIS, census data, archives, indigenous literature, etc. Working with partners such as educational institutions, government departments and ministries, non-government organizations and community-based organizations are also covered under this wider remit.

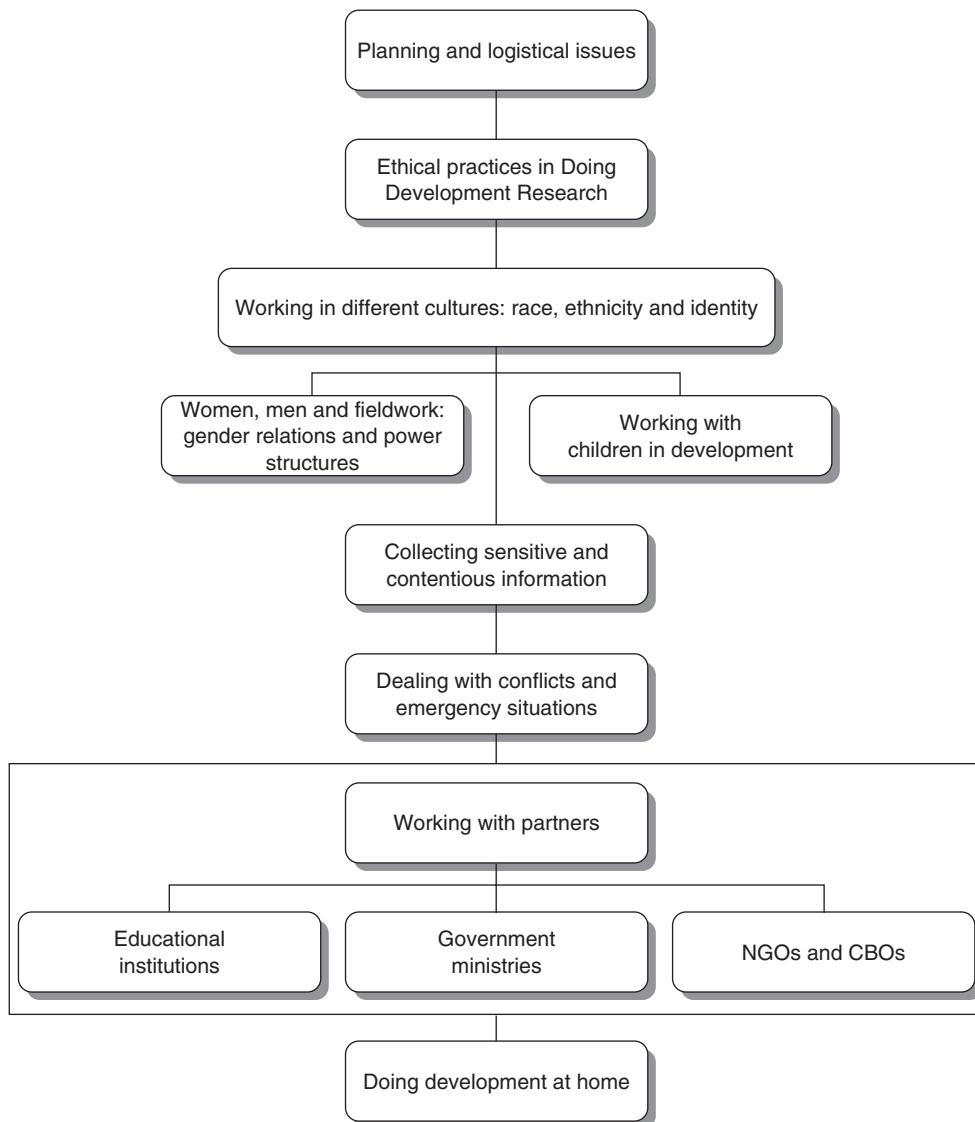
Structure and content

After the brief introduction and overview of the aims and scope of *Doing Development Research* provided in this chapter, which comprises Part I of the volume, the book is divided into two principal sections (Parts II and III):

The strategic issues involved in planning and executing sound research are first surveyed in Part II of the book (see Figure 1.1). The chapters in this part cover both working in the field and working via secondary sources. It aims to introduce readers to both the practicalities and the realities of undertaking development-oriented research.

Part III then overviews the *main ways in which information and data can be collected in*

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Figure 1.1 The main strategic issues in planning sound research dealt with in Part II of *Doing Developments Research*

carrying out development-oriented research. This is designed to selecting appropriate methods. Part III is itself split into three sub-parts:

- Section (i) deals with *methods of social research* by which data can be collected at first-hand. These chapters also cover associated forms of analysis, where these are relevant. However, the primary aim of *Doing*

Development Research is not to cover statistical and other forms of data analysis. These issues are covered in far greater detail in custom-made books written for this purpose (for example, see Kitchen and Tate, 2000; Robinson, 1998).

- Section (ii) deals with *how existing knowledge and sources can be used to inform analyses of development issues*. Too often these can be

forgotten in the rush to collate new and relevant data. This section also makes a valuable contribution in focusing attention on up-to-date, state-of-the-art innovative approaches such as those afforded by the use of the internet, using images, films and photography, and data from international development agencies such as the United Nations and World Bank.

- Section (iii), consisting of two chapters, points the way in terms of *how research can be written up effectively*, and how the results of research can be disseminated professionally. This final section is not a substitute for texts which deal specifically and comprehensively with how to write up the results of research. Such guides exist for the undergraduate (Walliman, 2004), for Masters candidates (Hart, 2004), with respect to theses and dissertations in general (Glatthorn and Joyner, 2005; Oliver, 2003; Roberts, 2004; Rudestam and Newton, 2000), and for the doctoral student (Craswell, 2004; Wellington et al., 2005). Rather, this section provides a starting point to get readers thinking about such issues and hopefully to refer to the specialist texts that exist.

Throughout, *Doing Development Research* tries to maintain a basically common-sense approach and adopts a much needed cross-cultural perspective. The book seeks to use straightforward language to guide those doing overseas research through the choice of an appropriate set of research methods, the implementation of the research, and how to communicate the findings to a range of audiences (see Chapter 30 and 31).

Doing Development Research and paradigms of development

One of the main reasons that we regard *Doing Development Research* to be so necessary is that development studies and associated research have been, and still are, characterized by a

multiplicity of philosophical approaches and associated epistemologies. By an epistemology, we mean theories as to how we find out about the world. Different development agendas reflect different political, economic, social, cultural, ethical and even moral and religious goals (Cowan and Shenton, 1996; Potter et al., 2004; Power, 2003; Rapley, 1996). Thus, thinking about development has shown many sharp twists and turns over the past 150 years.

Further, the various ideas about development that have taken centre stage have not commanded attention in a strictly sequential manner. In other words, as new sets of ideas about development have come to prominence, earlier theories and models have not been totally discarded. For example, the right wing of the political spectrum have held on to free-market policies and have re-promulgated them as part of the 'New Right'. Equally, even given the near total collapse of state socialism since 1989, Marxist-inspired views and theories still pervade many areas of development thinking. So, as argued by Potter et al. (2004), theories and strategies of development have tended to stack up upon one another. Thus, Hettne (1995: 64) drew attention to the argument that theories of development in the social sciences 'accumulate rather than fade away'.

In addition, it is clear that over time different sets of thought about development have been associated with different philosophies of science and associated epistemologies. And at each stage, these different approaches have therefore been associated with different views as to how we set about finding out about the world, by means of collecting data and evidence (see Table 1.1). Naturally, this broad relationship between sets of thinking about development and linked methods has not been a perfect or mechanical one, for the reasons just explained. As we have said, old theories of development never die – in fact, they don't even seem to fade away (Potter et al., 2004). So, by extension, the approaches to finding out

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Table 1.1 The broad association between philosophies of science, paradigms of development and the broad approaches covered in this book

<i>Philosophy</i>	<i>Broad paradigm of development studies¹</i>	<i>Broad approaches covered in this book</i>
Empiricism	Historical approaches (pre-1950s onwards)	Field surveys Inventories Census data Data from government ministries
Logical Positivism	Classical-traditional approaches (mainly 1950s/1960s)	Questionnaires Interviews GIS Remote sensing Archives
Structuralism	Radical political economy-dependency approaches (1960s onwards)	Literature reviews Indigenous literature Data from international agencies Film, images and photography
Humanism	Alternative and another development (1980s onwards)	Ethnographic approaches Participant observation Participatory research methods Focus groups Diaries and case studies

¹*Categorization based on Potter et al., 2004: 82–120.*

that have been associated with different theories of development are also still in currency. As a broad generalization, early approaches stressed development as economic growth and therefore emphasized quantitative approaches. Later, more humanistic approaches to development saw the rise of participatory and qualitative lines of investigation, with the aim being to put fewer words into respondents' mouths and to listen more effectively (see Chapter 18).

Broadly speaking, the earliest approaches in any discipline tend to be *empiricist*. They subscribe to the view that we find out about the world by observing what has happened and how it is structured. In development studies, this has meant looking at what history tells us

about how countries and regions have developed and changed through time. As shown in Table 1.1, early and continuing approaches in the subject, therefore, have been associated with collecting data out in the field – for example, doing farm and rural surveys (see Chapters 13 and 14), urban and village assessments and inventories. Of course, just as we were arguing above, empirical data are still frequently collected as part of development research, whether collected in the field or from national censuses or data collated by government ministries or international agencies (see Chapters 27 and 29). They are often the 'staples' of basic and applied or practical research.

In most areas of intellectual endeavour, over time, pure empiricism tends to be replaced by

logical positivism. Positivism is associated with the rise of the scientific method under conditions of modernity, subscribing to what is generally referred to as 'enlightenment thinking' (Power, 2003). Positivism basically argues that we come to understand the world by observing what has been the case experimentally. When formal ideas are tested repeatedly, this is referred to as *logical positivism*. The rise of what may be referred to as classical-traditional approaches to development (see Potter et al., 2004: Chapter 3) in the 1950s and early 1960s can be temporally associated with the rise to prominence of positivism in geography and development studies, as shown in Table 1.1. During this period, empirical data, such as numbers of hospital beds per 1,000 of the population, road network densities, were mapped to show levels of so-called modernization. And surveys were also done using questionnaires (see Chapter 17) and interviews (see Chapter 15) in order to capture data that can be tested against 'reality'. Indeed, the tenets of logical positivism remain with us to the present day, in the form of remote sensing and GIS (see Chapter 26) and other areas of quantification and hypothesis-testing in development-oriented work.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there were two broad reactions to the general hegemony of the classical-traditional approach which stressed the salience of economic growth (Potter et al., 2004: Chapter 3). The first is referred to as *structuralism* and is principally associated with the 1960s; and the second is *humanism*, which came to prominence in the 1970s. These paradigm changes were both linked with yet further changes in epistemology and associated methodological approaches.

1 *Structuralism* is the idea that there are unseen structures and forces that guide the path of global and local events, with these often being of a political-strategic nature. This was the approach adopted by radicals in the 1960s, who argued that the global capitalist system was inherently biased against 'true'

development, and had served to accentuate extremes in wealth and inequality. This was associated with the rise of neo-Marxist and dependency approaches in the arena of development studies (Desai and Potter, 2002). Data from international agencies and indigenous Latin American and Caribbean writings became grist to the data mill during this era.

The important point is that approaches to data collection in development studies remain as diverse as philosophies of development themselves. And this is even more so today, in an era associated with what may be referred to as post-structuralism and postmodernity. The world is significantly more global and more complex than ever before – and it is argued that singular theories and conceptualizations are too limiting by far. Meta-theories and narratives have been replaced by a multiplicity of conceptualizations and approaches. Hence, students of development studies, defined broadly, need to be aware of the wide variety of approaches that are open to them, before embarking on their intensive work. This explains the *raison d'être* of *Doing Development Research*.

2 *Humanism* stressed the importance of the individual and ways of perceiving, thinking and doing. In development studies this was linked with the argument that the conditions under which people are living, their lifestyles, culture and their reactions are key (see Chapter 19). It is important to understand the multiplicity of perspectives that are valuable in understanding the complexities of development issues. It is also associated with thinking about empowering the voices of different groups – women, children, men, ethnic minorities, etc. (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). This actively promotes opportunities for the less privileged to undertake research with the privileged (i.e. the researcher). The approach later came to be associated with the rise of green, environmentally-oriented eco-development, broadly against a backdrop of corporate big business. The trend was accordingly towards qualitative data expressing the circumstances of people's day-to-day

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lives. Interviews, often of the semi-structured variety, became more important as a research methodology (Chapter 15), and in development studies participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) and associated methods were the outcome (see Chapter 20). Approaches based on indigenous literature (Chapter 23), film, images or photography also emanated from this era (Chapter 24). Focus groups, ethnographic approaches, participant observation and diaries and case studies all now have an important role to play in such studies (see Chapters 16, 19 and 21 respectively). It is essential to remember that research is a two-way process of interaction. In this process researchers need to be politically aware and need to be able to handle conflictual, sensitive or contentious information. Chapters 7 and 8 specifically hope to raise awareness of such issues. Similarly, a lot of research is now done in collaboration or in partnership with either academics or various types of institution based in developing countries. Chapter 9, 10 and 11 specifically concentrate on educational institutes, government ministries, and NGOs and CBOs.

Format of chapters

Excluding this introduction, *Doing Development Research* consists of 31 short chapters. As

already noted, the overarching aim is to provide a user-friendly introduction to the process of carrying out development research, covering the conceptualization of the piece of work to its write-up and dissemination.

In respect to each chapter, the authors were asked to include short summaries of the content of their chapters. The contributors were also invited to include graphics or photographs, and tables, wherever these would add considerably to the text. Likewise, boxed case studies could also be included at appropriate points in the text where they would aid understanding. It was requested that chapters should finish with a list of key items of further reading as an aid for those wishing to take topics further. In addition, authors were invited to add a maximum of fifteen additional bibliographic references. If pertinent websites exist, then it was suggested that no more than five useful sites should be listed. At the end of each chapter, approximately five questions or discussion topics are provided to act as a guide for class and tutorial discussions.

These features were all designed to try to ensure that *Doing Development Studies* is a practical learning tool for students who are setting about undertaking their first, or early, piece of development-oriented research, whether in the field, study, library or archive.

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